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FALSE AND TRUE STYLES IN CARPETS.

BY GEORGE CURTIS WRIGHT.

Our illustrations (Plates Nos. 1 and 2) represent styles of design as applied to floor coverings, Fig. 1 being a false order of decoration for carpets.

This is a fair example of the average design formerly met with in every carpet salesroom, and to a considerable extent at the present time in many of our so-called, leading carpet houses. For many years these wretched attempts at design, profuse in the most brilliant colors, were placed before the people, who eagerly sought out the one most brilliant and gaudy, thereby encouraging the manufacturer to produce others equally monstrous, to rival, if possible, its predecessor in its vivid coloring and incongruous drawing. The public

ducing either woven or printed carpets, and the day is not far distant, in which it will be difficult to find a carpet design with any attempt at a natural representation of flowers, trees, birds, etc. There are no laws of interior decoration other than those of good taste, which must be intuitive to be appreciated. A carpet, in which the pattern is shaded in imitation of natural objects, becomes an absurdity when we remember that if it were really what it pretends to be, no one could walk on it with comfort.

Little or no attention has been given by designers in this branch of decoration, to the law that a flat surface should be treated with flat ornament; that is, with designs which represent a flat surface.

This does not exclude the use of flowers, fruits, leaves and arabesques. It only requires that they should be treated flatly, and not with effects of light and shade. Carpet patterns may have a geometrical formation, this arrangement suggesting

greenish-blue), might be introduced in proper proportions through the pattern. It will be apparent to the most unskilled eye that such a design, with the coloring above described, would be far more desirable than any attempt at realistic drawing in light and shade and gaudy coloring.

INLAYING.

WHEN Satinwood was popular as a furniture wood, inlaying became a means of setting off its delicate color and strengthening its effect. Simple woods, in brightest colors attainable in nature, or dye, were used, and patterns of a primitive character followed. Tulip, zebra-wood, rosewood, or purple wood were favorites, and deservedly so, for with them the necessity of dye was not felt. Ebony and ivory were more or less used, ebony we might say, extensively, and specimens of work bearing these inlays are often met with to-day.

The process of inlaying became so expensive, that imitations were freely made, with which persons of ordinary means might apparently possess the same luxu-



FIG. 1.

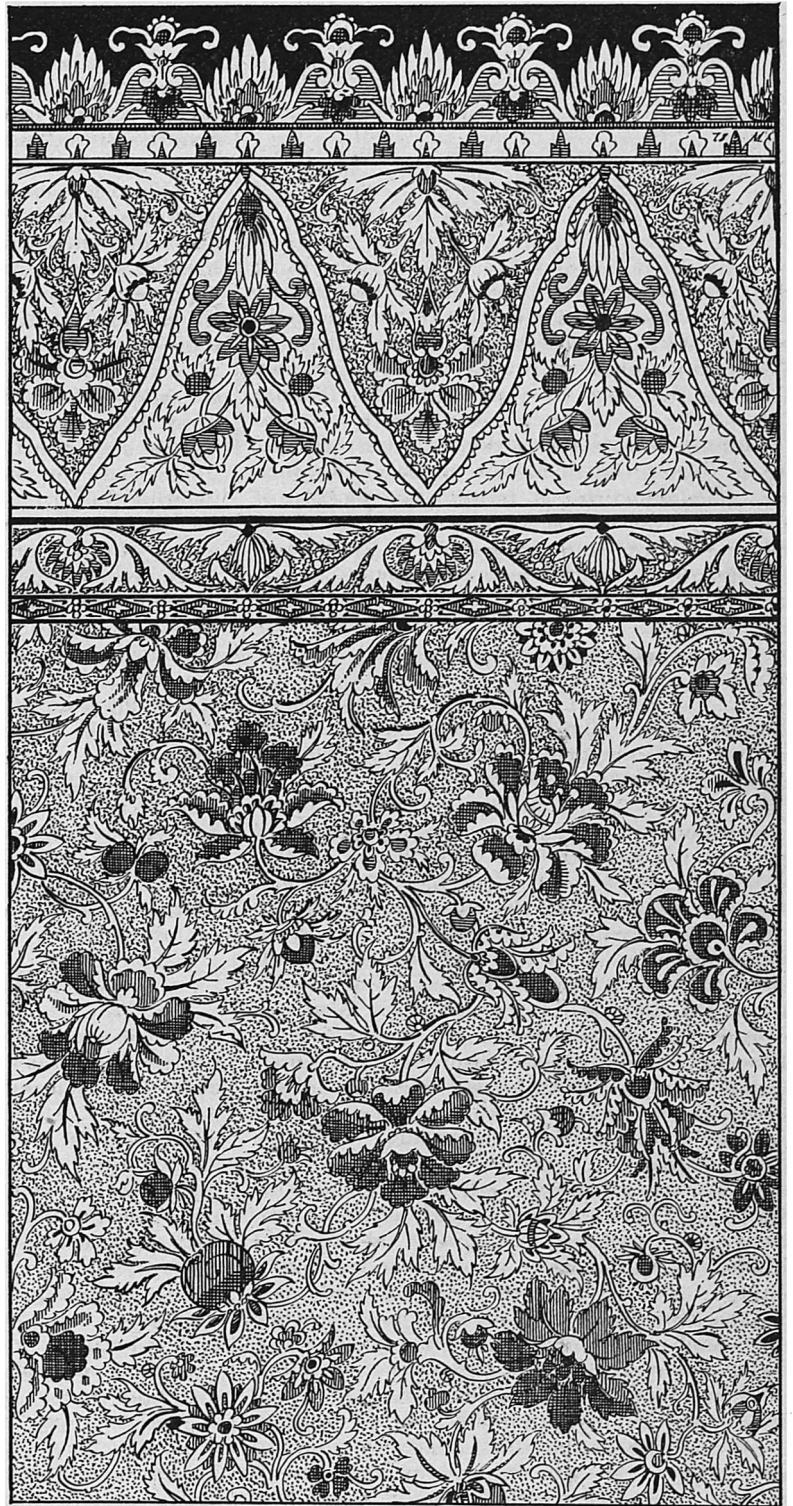


FIG. 2.

seemed never to become, as it were, satiated with these curiosities in art. It must be evident to even the novice in decorative matters, that curtains in bright crimson with gold fringe, cord and tassels, festooned and supported in the most impossible manner, should have no place upon our floors. Large gold and brown ornaments in relief, with strong light and shade effects, surround a group of gaudily colored flowers of a doubtful origin (botanically speaking), placed upon a white ground, the whole resting upon a ground of black, comprises the figure, which, when matched upon the floor and surrounded by ornaments and furniture, is the most conspicuous object in the room. We are glad to chronicle a rapid decrease in the number of carpet designs of this class, now placed before the public.

A more respectful attention is paid to the modest and appropriate decorations for floors, as made nowadays in most of the factories pro-

the idea of order and system. A pattern void of a geometrical basis should present a general evenness of surface.

The general "all over" effect, as represented in Fig. 2 (a modern carpet design), without any particular part too accentuated, presents the general appearance of evenness proper for the purpose of floor ornament. A carpet, serving as it does for a background to furniture, should be of a somewhat subdued or neutral character. A border to match is an essential element in floor covering, quite as important as the frame should be to a picture. The coloring of design (Fig. 2) as an example of quiet and unobtrusive tones, might be composed—first, for a ground, a combination of three colors; ruby, middle reddish brown and old gold, forming in the goods a mottled and somewhat neutral color. The figures all to be surrounded with black, and green brown olive (of a medium tone) next, a brick red, and dark peacock (or

riant and costly articles as their neighbors, at little real expenditure. Staining and painting came more generally into favor, and was made so perfect that it soon commanded a figure that compared very well with the prices of that which it had come to replace, and was adopted by the fashionable world as a more chaste and elegant means of ornamentation than the former. Naturally, this decoration gradually became distinctive, and when its hold upon the tastes of the people had become so certain as to give it a value based upon its own merits, all attempts at imitation of inlay were discarded, and in the beautifully colored panels of the French school we find an absolute individuality of treatment and characters defined, that would be impracticable for the limited possibilities of the more real work.

The fallacy of this preference, however, was, of course, short lived, and the lasting qualities of real wood overcame the transient beauty of pigments. Riesner, Roertgen, Heppelwhite and Sheraton brought marquetry again into prominence, and royal commissions enabled them to produce such specimens, as would go far toward convincing the advocate of paint, if there were any in truth, that their choice was founded more upon delusion than fact.